



# CREEPY

A WARREN MAGAZINE  
FDC

## 1971 ANNUAL

60¢



**A SLITHERING SELECTION  
OF THE BEST IN TERROR TALES  
FROM THE EARLY ISSUES**

**OF THE WORLD'S NO. 1 ILLUSTRATED HORROR MAGAZINE**

Kenneth S.



***FEAR HAS MANY FACES...***

AND YOU'LL MEET THEM ***ALL*** IN  
THIS COLOSSAL COLLECTION OF  
THE VERY ***BEST*** IN ILLUSTRATED  
TERROR AND SUSPENSE FROM  
THE ***FIRST SEVEN*** ISSUES OF  
MY MONSTROUS MAG ***CREEPY!***  
THRILL TO THE STORIES AND  
ARTWORK THAT FIENDS EVERY-  
WHERE KNOW AND LOVE IN THIS  
***COLLECTOR'S EDITION*** OF THE...

**CREEPY '71 ANNUAL**





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"AT FIRST, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING EXCEPT THE WOODS AROUND ME, BUT I ***SENSE*** SOMETHING... ***SOMETHING HUMAN!*** THEN THE GIRL APPEARS, WALKING WITH QUICK NERVOUS STEPS..."



"THE SMELL OF FEAR IS ON HER, GROWING AS THE NIGHT WIND MAKES THE TREES AND BRANCHES CREAK AND MOAN..."



"HER HEAD DARTS FIRST THIS WAY, THEN THAT... STARTING AT EVERY SHADOW, EACH RATTLE OF DRY LEAVES SWEEP ACROSS THE GROUND..."



"I CAN ALMOST HEAR HER HEART POUNDING... SHE HASN'T SEEN ME YET, BUT SHE STARTS TO RUN, SUDDENLY SURE OF DANGER NEARBY..."



"THEN WHEN IT IS TOO LATE, SHE LOOKS TO THE BRANCHES ABOVE!"



WHAT'S UP MUST COME DOWN, EH, BREATHLESS BROWERS? IT'S NOT A BIRD, NOT A PLANE, AND CERTAINLY NOT YOU KNOW WHO... YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH A CREEPY CREATURE WHOSE TRADE IS BEGINNING TO BRANCH OUT... NOW, MEET THE...

# BEAST MAN!



...THE DREAM ENDED WITH THE  
THING KILLIN' THE GIRL, WALSH...  
LIKE A WILD BEAST! ONLY IT AIN'T  
JUST A WILD BEAST...



...IT'S  
ME!

JUST A NIGHTMARE,  
AMES...  
SHOULDN'T  
LET A NIGHT-  
MARE UPSET  
YOU! EVERYBODY  
HAS 'EM!



NOT LIKE THIS... NOT  
THIS *REAL*! AND I  
KEEP HAVIN' 'EM...  
EVER SINCE THE  
OPERATION! SHOULDN'T  
HAVE LET YOU AND  
DOC TALK ME INTO  
THAT OPERATION!

WHAT KINDA TALK  
IS THAT? WE  
SAVED YOUR LIFE  
... SAVED THE  
BUSINESS TOO!



ACROSS THE NIGHT  
AIR COMES THE  
SOUND OF STAMPING  
FEET... OF WHISTLES  
AND CAT-CALLS...  
NOISES OF THE  
IMPATIENT, THE  
UNRULY...



BUT THIS MORNING,  
WALSH... MY CLOTHES  
ALL RIPPED AND TORN  
...YOU SAY I DID IT  
IN MY SLEEP... YOU  
CAN'T BE *SURE*! MAYBE.

*MAYBE NOTHING!*  
COMIN' BEFORE THE  
YOKELS TEAR THE  
TENT DOWN!

WHAT TOOK SO  
LONG, YA BIG APE!

HEY, GORILLA!  
TONIGHT YOU'RE  
GONNA LOSE YOUR  
HIDE!

DO THEY HAFTA  
CALL ME *THAT*?  
I HATE THAT  
NAME... *HATE IT!*



**\$100 TO ANYONE  
STAYING 3 ROUNDS  
WITH THE  
GORILLA**

FORGET  
THE NAME,  
THINK OF THE TAKE!  
LOOKIT  
THIS CROWD  
...THE RUBES  
LOVE TO  
HATE YOU...



SHOULD'VE  
QUIT WHEN I  
WAS GOING  
TO... BEFORE  
THE OPERATION  
... THE DAY I  
TOLD WALSH...



**QUIT?** ARE YOU NUTS? WE'RE UNDER CONTRACT FOR THIS TOUR... IN DEBT FOR EQUIPMENT... ALREADY ADVERTISED IN CITIES ALONG THE ROAD...

SAW A SPECIALIST IN TOWN TODAY 'BOUT THOSE PAINS I'VE BEEN GETTING... SAYS IT'S MY HEART... SAYS IF I KEEP FIGHTIN' THEY'LL KEEP GETTIN' WORSE!

WALSH, I AIN'T CRAZY 'BOUT THIS CARNIVAL BUSINESS ANYHOW, NOW IT COULD KILL ME... NEVER BEEN MUCH ON THINKIN', BUT THERE MUST BE SOMEWAY AROUND IT..

BIG LUG LIKE YOU WITH A BUM TICKER... ANYRIGHT, ANYRIGHT! I'LL FIGURE SOMETHIN' OUT!



AND WITHIN A WEEK, WALSH HAD THE ANSWER.

**T-THE DOG?** HE'S NOTHIN' BUT A YET FOR THE SHOW ANIMALS... AND A RUNWAY TO BOOT!

HE WAS ALSO A BRILLIANT SURGEON BEFORE THE AUTHORITIES NAILED HIM FOR UNORTHODOX PRACTICES... **TRUST ME!**



WITH A BAD HEART, CERTAIN TO KILL IN A FEW YEARS, WHAT WAS THERE TO LOSE?

THIS SEDATIVE WILL PUT YOU OUT IN A FEW MINUTES... LET'S GET YOU IN TO THE OPERATING TABLE..

THERE'S NO SWEAT, AMES! I WOULDN'T RISK THIS IF I THOUGHT ANYTHING'D GO WRONG...



THE GRIP OF THE SEDATIVE WAS IMMEDIATE, ALLOWING ONLY ONE LAST QUICK GLIMPSE BEFORE OVERPOWERING...

**T-THE GORILLA...** THE ONE... THEY HAD TO SHOOT... THIS MORNING...

SHOOT? YES, BUT IN THE HEAD... HE STILL HAS A FINE, HEALTHY...



**-HEART!**



THE SOUND OF THE SONG DRIVES AMES'S TORTURED THOUGHTS BACK TO THE PRESENT... BACK TO THE GLARE OF OVERHEAD LIGHTS AND THE POUNDING LEATHER... HARD WILD PUNCHES RAIN IN ON HIM, TO BE IGNORED, SLUGGED OFF, AND RETURNED!



HE FIGHTS WITHOUT STYLE, WITHOUT TECHNIQUE, SLASHING AND JABBING WITH AN INSTINCTIVE FURY... AN ANIMAL VICIOUSNESS THAT COMES NOT FROM TRAINING, BUT... *FROM THE HEART!*



THEN, IT IS ALL OVER, UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, THE NEXT TOWN...

HERE'S YOUR CUT! YOU SHOULD GIVE THOSE LOCAL BOYS MORE OF A CHANCE BEFORE FINISHING THEM... WE'RE GONNA RUN OUT OF TAKERS!

SOMETHIN' HAPPENS TO ME IN THE RING, WALSH... JUST LIKE IN THOSE DREAMS! I GO WILD... C-CAN'T HELP IT, EVER SINCE THE OPERATION!



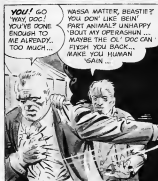
I GET MORE LIKE AN ANIMAL EVERY DAY...



...AND NIGHTS I DON'T EVEN WANNA KNOW ABOUT!







THE CRIES OF THE MENAGERIE BEASTS ECHO ABOUT THE NOW DESERTED CARNIVAL GROUNDS FALLING ON UNINTERESTED EARS...

HA! THE BIG JERK LOOKED REALLY CONVINCED WHEN HE RAN OFF... REALLY BELIEVES HE TURNS INTO A GORILLA!



JUST LIKE HE REALLY BELIEVED HE HAD A BAD HEART!



RELUCTANT TO BELIEVE HE MIGHT LOSE HIS MEAL TICKET, WALSH HAD RECHECKED AMES'S CONDITION WITH THE HEART SPECIALIST...

B-BUT YOUR X-RAYS SHOW HIS TICKER'S OKAY! THE BIG APE LIED...

PHYSICALLY OKAY... SUBCONSCIOUSLY, HE HATES BOXING, TRIES TO ESCAPE IT WITH ATTACKS INDUCED BY HIS OWN MIND... PSYCHOSOMATIC, BUT NO LESS FATAL... ONLY BY QUITTING CAN HE BE CURED!



YET THE VERY CAUSE OF AMES'S CONDITION SUGGESTED A CURE...

IF HE CONVINCED HIMSELF HE'S GOT A BUM HEART, HE CAN CONVINCE HIMSELF HE'S GOT A NEW HEART... THE HEART OF AN ANIMAL MORE OF A FIGHTER THAN AMES COULD EVER BE!

THE CUT ON HIS CHEST'LL LOOK JUST LIKE AN INCISION WAS MADE... FAR AS HE'LL EVER KNOW, I DID OPERATE ON HIM TONIGHT!



A CURE THAT WOULD PREVENT HIS EVER TRYING TO QUIT AGAIN!

FROM TIME TO TIME I'LL GIVE HIM A SHOT OF THIS... THE LUG'LL THINK IT'S POST-OPERATIONAL TREATMENT! ACTUALLY IT PUTS HIM IN A TRANSLIKE STATE, OPEN TO SUGGESTION...

AND THE THINGS I'M GONNA SUGGEST'LL HAVE HIM CONVINCED HE'S MORE APE THAN MAN! HE WON'T BE FIT FOR ANYTHING BUT THIS RACKET!



RIPPING HIS CLOTHING AFTER THE DREAMS I SUGGESTED REALLY DID THE TRICK ON THE POOR BOOB...



NOW ALL I GOTTA DO IS KEEP DOC HAPPY SO HE DOESN'T SPILL THE BEANS!

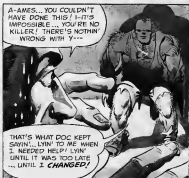


DOC! HEY, YOU OLD RUMPTOT... LET'S GO INTO TOWN! HIT A FEW NIGHTSPOTS... DOC?



@@##\*! DARK... WHERE'ZAT LIGHT CORD?





THE JUNGLE NIGHT WAS ALIVE WITH NOISES...THE SCREECH OF A MARAUDING OWL...THE MOCK LAUGHTER OF A STALKING HYENA...AND THE DESPERATE MOANS OF A MAN IN PAIN...

I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING, HE DOESN'T RESPOND TO ANY TREATMENT...IT'S UNCANNY, **UNNATURAL!** BEST TO LEAVE HIM TIED UP TILL WE CAN MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO MOVE HIM! I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND...

HIS OWN STORY DOESN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE...DELIRIOUS THROUGH MOST OF THE TELLING...APPARENTLY, HE WANDERED INTO THE **TABOO** TERRITORY...



NATURALLY, CURIOUS DEVILS THAT WE ARE, WE'RE GOING TO VENTURE IN THE **TABOO** COUNTRY OURSELVES AND FIND OUT JUST WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MOANING GENTLEMAN TO BRING HIM UNDER...



# A CURSE of CLAWS!

GAME HAD BEEN BAD FOR A WEEK, AND THE NIGHTS HUNT MOST FRUITLESS OF ALL. THE OTHERS HAD TURNED BACK, BUT STARK, BELLIGERENT, DETERMINED, ANGRY, HAD PUSHED ON...MUCH FURTHER THAN THE REST OF THE PARTY HAD EVER CARED, OR **DARED** TO GO...

STREAM AHEAD IS THE DIVIDING LINE...IF THE BEARERS ARE TO BE BELIEVED, BEYOND THAT IS BAD MEDICINE, FORBIDDEN...**WHAT DRIVE!**

NO WONDER HUNTING'S BAD...STUPID SUPERSTITION CREATES A REFUGE FOR ALL THE GAME! 'TUNE SOMETHING WAS DONE ABOUT IT...**BY ME!**

THE COUGHING SNARL OF A BIG CAT BROUGHT STARK TO A STANDSTILL...THROUGH THE WAVING MISTS AND GRAY LIGHT OF PRE-DAWN, A GUSTING BLACK SHAPE MOVED SLEEKLY ON SPRING MUSCLES...



**BLAST!** THOUGHT GURE  
I'D BROUGHT HIM DOWN...

A HIDEOUS, ALMOST HUMAN,  
SHRIEK KNIFED THE STILL AIR,  
THEN THE BEAST WAS SWALLOWED  
BY BRUSH AND FOLIAGE ACROSS  
THE STREAM...

STARK EDGED FORWARD TO THE SPOT  
WHERE THE CAT HAD DISAPPEARED. HE  
WAS ANXIOUS AND EXCITED, BUT KNEW  
TOO WELL THE DANGERS OF PLUNGING  
INTO THE BRUSH AFTER A WOUNDED  
ANIMAL...

CAN'T GO FAR  
BLEEDING LIKE THAT...  
WON'T BE HARD  
TO TRACK...

THERE WAS AN OPPRESSIVE  
SILENCE TO THE JUNGLE BEYOND  
THE STREAM, THE MORNING MISTS  
SEEMED TO CLING THICKER AND  
HEAVIER, AND THE DRY GRASS  
TANGLED AND PULLED UNDERFOOT.  
BUT THE BRISHT CRIMSON TRAIL  
REMAINED CLEAR AND  
OBVIOUS, UNTIL...

WHAT THE DEVIL...

I-IT CAN'T BE... BUT THE  
TRAIL GOES NO FURTHER...  
THE WOUND'S RIGHT WHERE  
I PLACED MY SHOT... IT  
WAS A CAT! I KNOW  
I SHOT A CAT!

WOULD THAT MAKE YOUR ACT LESS PROFANE,  
**MURDERER?** IN THIS JUNGLE THE CAT IS **SACRED!**

THERE HAD BEEN NO SOUND, NO WARNING... GRIPPED WITH CHILL HORROR, OF THE UNKNOWN, BRAD STARK'S EYES WIDENED IN DISBELIEF AT THE INCREDIBLE VISION MENACINGLY POISED BEFORE HIM.

FOR AN OUTSIDER TO TREAD THIS SACRED GROUND IS **FORBIDDEN...**

TO SLAY ONE OF MY SERVANTS... **UNFORGIVEABLE!**

STARK COULD NOT SPEAK. HIS THROAT WAS PARCHED, DRY... BUT HIS HANDS WERE MOIST, CLAMMY, AS THEY TIGHTLY GRIPPED HIS RIFLE...

DO NOT RAISE YOUR WEAPON! UNLESS YOU CHOOSE TO PERISH BEFORE THE FURY OF MY SERVANTS... RIPPED TO SHREDS BY A WHIRLWIND OF CLAWS! I AM LILITH, HIGH PRIESTESS OF WASHTI, **GODDESS OF CATS!** YOUR FATE IS MINE TO DECIDE...

SLOWLY, STARK LET THE WEAPON SLIP FROM HIS FINGERS. HE COULD NEVER BEGIN TO BRING IT TO PLAY AGAINST ALL THE GLEAMING-EYED HORDE HE FACED. DESPERATELY, HIS MIND PROBED FOR A COURSE OF ACTION, HIS FINGERS BRUSHED A CIGARETTE LIGHTER INSIDE HIS JACKET...

W-WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO WITH ME?

YOUR BARBARITY HAS COST THE LIFE OF ONE WHO SERVED ME WELL... WHAT PUNISHMENT COULD BE MORE FITTING THAN THAT... **YOU TAKE HIS PLACE!**

EVEN AS STARK'S LIPS BEGAN TO FORM THE WORD "HOW?", LILITH MOVED FORWARD, LONG NAILLED FINGERS STRETCHED TOWARD HIM, HER EYES, GLEAMING AND GLOWING, ALMOST HYPNOTICALLY... PROMISING MORE DANGER THAN ANY JUNGLE BEAST, YET RADIATING AN IRRESISTIBLE APPEAL. HE COULD SMELL THE RICHNESS OF HER FLESH, THE FRAGRANCE OF HER LUSH, FLOWING HAIR... HER LIPS, MOIST AND BRILLIANT, PARTED AND LIFTED UP TO HIS...

IT'S VERY SIMPLE...

ALL IT TAKES IS...

**ONE KISS!**





THE WILL TO SURVIVE RIPPED STARK TO HIS SENSES. HE GRAPPLIED HARD WITH THE GIRL, TEARING THE BRIGHT CRIMSON LIPS AWAY FROM HIS OWN BEFORE THEIR FIERY TOUCH COULD TURN HIM INTO ONE OF THE MAN-HAUNTED BEASTS NOW CROUCHED AND COILED TO SPRING...

BEFORE THOSE **DEVIL CATS** GET ME, PRESTRESS, THEY'LL HAVE TO CLAW THEIR WAY THROUGH YOU!

A TERRIBLE CHORUS OF WILD SNARLS AND VICIOUS CRIES FROM THE ANIMALS SPLIT THE AIR, ENOUGH TO PARALYZE A LESS DESPERATE MAN! IN HIS ARMS, ULITH BECAME AS A JUNGLE BEAST HERSELF, LASHING AND STRUGGLING WITH UNHOLY MIGHT, AS WITH ONE HAND, STARK FUMBLER WITH THE LIGHTER...



BLACK SMOKE AND HUGE FINGERS OF FLAME JOINED AND OVERPOWERED THE BREAKING MISTS, CREATING A BURNING BARRIER, STEADILY DRIVING BACK THE ORINGING, SNARLING FELINES... STILL, LIKE A RAGING PANTHER, ULITH STRUGGLED, HER LONG NAILS RAKING AND TEARING AT A HUNDRED PLACES ON HIS CLOTHING AND BODY...

IF EVER HE'D HAD THE THOUGHT OF LETTING HER LIVE, RAGE WIPED IT AWAY AS STARK BATTERED AND HAMMERED AT THE WRITHING, CLAWING GIRL... HE SNORE THROUGH CLENCHED TEETH AS SHE BIT FIRST ONE OF HIS HANDS, THEN THE OTHER, AS THEY FOUGHT TO REACH THE SOFT WHITENESS OF HER THROAT...



**#09166**  
**SHE PANTHER! I'LL KILL YOU! KILL YOU!**



BEYOND THE WALL OF FLAMES, STARK COULD ALMOST FEEL THE FRUSTRATED FURY OF THE TRAPPED ANIMALS AS THEY SCREAMED TO AID THE GIRL, WHO NOW BENT BACK, HELPLESSLY AS HIS FINGERS FOUND THEIR MARK... HER GLOWING EYES GREW MOIST AND PAIN, HER VOICE BECAME A CHOKED, RAGING WHISPER...

Y-YOU THINK YOU'VE ESCAPED THE CLAIMS OF MY SERVANTS... THOUGH I DIE AT YOUR HAND, THOUGH YOU WALK FROM THIS GROUND... THE FATE IS STILL YOURS... SO I CURSE YOU, CURSE YOU...

EVEN AS THE WORDS WERE UTTERED, LUTHE DIED. STARK TURNED AND FLED, THE HEAT OF HIS SELF-MADE INFERNO LICKING AT HIS BACK, THE PAINED ROARS OF THE JUNGLE CATS ECHOING IN HIS EARS...

N-NONE OF THOSE CATS'LL SURVIVE THE FIRE... HER CURSE'LL NEVER TOUCH ME... NEVER!

STARK STAGGERED BACK THROUGH THE JUNGLE, HAUNTED BY ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM, STOPPING NEITHER TO GULP OR REST, EAT OR RELAX UNTIL HE REACHED THE CAMP...

THERE YOU ARE, OLD MAN, NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! THOSE SCRATCHES ALL LOOKED NASTY, BUT NONE OF 'EM WERE VERY DEEP... BE HEALED IN NO TIME!

BUT THEY FEEL FUNNY, BEAMISH... THEY TINGLE, ITCH... AND MY HANDS, WHERE SHE BIT ME...

A LITTLE MORE SERIOUS, BUT NOTHING TO BE UPSET ABOUT... NO SIGN OF INFECTION...

**THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG!**  
FINGERS FEEL SO STIFF... I CAN'T MOVE THEM!

THEN, THE DELIRIUM SET IN. ALL NIGHT LONG, STARK SMOULDED AND MUMBLED, AND WHEN MORNING CAME...

GOOD LORD, MAN! YOU'VE REOPENED ALL THE WOUNDS!

KEEP ITCHING, TINGLING... CAN'T STAND IT... MUST SCRATCH THEM... CAN'T STAND IT... MUST...



FINALLY, THE DOCTOR WAS CALLED IN...

MAKE IT STOP...CAN'T  
STAND THE ITCHING...  
MAKE IT STOP...MAKE  
IT STOP...

HAVE TO KEEP  
HIM BOUND, WON'T  
LEAVE THE  
WOUNDS  
ALONE...

THEY SHOULDN'T BE  
CAUSING HIM *THAT*  
MUCH TROUBLE...  
AND HIS HANDS! SO  
GNARLED AND DIS-  
COLORED... I JUST DON'T  
UNDERSTAND!

ALL WE CAN DO NOW  
IS MOVE HIM TO THE CITY,  
TO A HOSPITAL... EVEN  
THEN I...

AIEEEEEEEEEEE!

STARK!

BOTH MEN RUSHED TO THE TENT, HEARTS POUNDING,  
FEARING WHAT THEY MIGHT FIND... FOR A TIME, THEIR EYES  
BLINKED IN THE DARKNESS, SLOWLY GROWING ACCUSTOMED  
TO ITS DENSITY, SLOWLY GROWING AWARE OF THE HORROR  
WITHIN...

LORD HELP HIM! HIS NECK  
BROKEN THE ROPES...  
WE'RE TOO LATE!

EVEN IN THE DIM SHADOWS, BOTH MEN FLINCHED AT  
THE GORY SPECTACLE BEFORE THEM...

N-NO MAN COULD DO THAT TO  
HIMSELF... IT'S NOT PHYSICALLY  
POSSIBLE! IT'S AS THOUGH  
SOME WILD BEAST RIPPED  
HIM TO SHREDS...

I KNOW,  
DOCTOR... I  
KNOW...

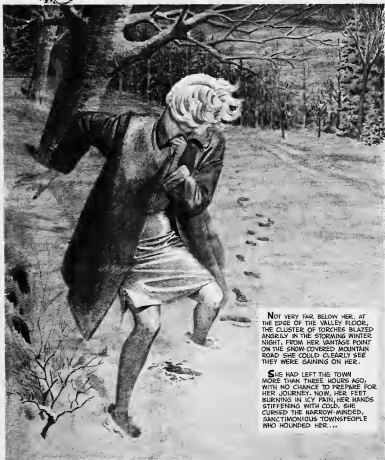
...AND WHO'S TO SAY  
IT WASN'T?!

AND IF THAT ENDING DOESN'T TEAR YOU UP, THEN  
YOU'D BETTER LOPE ALONG ON LITTLE CAT FEET AND SINK  
YOUR CLAWS INTO MY NEXT HORRENDOUS HOWLER...



WELL, HEN! SO, MY FRIENDS OF THE ABYSS, HERE WE STAND ON THE PRECIPICE OF ANOTHER HORRIFYING TALE FROM 'OL' UNCLE CREEPY. THIS STORY CONCERNS THE EVIL MACHINATIONS OF A WICKED WOMAN WHO TEMPTS FATE, ON...

# THE MOUNTAIN



NOT VERY FAR BELOW HER, AT THE EDGE OF THE VALLEY FLOOR, THE CLUSTER OF TORCHES BLAZED ANGRILY IN THE STORMING WINTER NIGHT. FROM HER VANTAGE POINT ON THE SNOW COVERED MOUNTAIN ROAD SHE COULD CLEARLY SEE THEY WERE GAINING ON HER.

SHE HAD LEFT THE TOWN MORE THAN THREE HOURS AGO, WITH NO CHANCE TO PREPARE FOR HER JOURNEY. NOW, HER FEET BURNING IN ICY PAIN, HER HANDS STIFFENING WITH COLD, SHE CURSED THE NARROW-MINDED, SANCTIMONIOUS TOWNSPEOPLE WHO HOUNDED HER...

SHE TURNED FROM THE ROAD AND BEGAN TRUDDING UPWARD. IT WAS A GAMBLE, BUT THEY MIGHT NOT FOLLOW HER. IF SHE KEPT TO THE ROAD, SHE REASONED, IN A LITTLE MORE THAN AN HOUR'S TIME THEY WOULD CATCH HER ANYWAY...AND IF THEY DID, THEY MIGHT KILL HER...



FALLING AND STUMBLING, SHE CLAMBERED DESPERATELY THROUGH THE DRIFTS. SHE KNEW THIS WAS ONLY A SMALL MOUNTAIN AND THAT THERE WAS THE SAFETY OF ANOTHER TOWN ON THE OTHER SIDE. WITH A LITTLE LUCK, SHE COULD MAKE IT...



GRASPING, SHE PAUSED TO REST, AND AS HER EYES SCANNED THE VALLEY BELOW, SHE SAW THE TRAIL OF TORCHES HEADING BACK TOWARD THE TOWN. THE TOWNSPEOPLE HAD GIVEN UP THE CHASE.



FOR LONG MINUTES SHE REMAINED THERE, BUT TO STAY THERE MEANT CERTAIN DEATH, SO SHE ONCE AGAIN BEGAN THE UPWARD CLIMB. TIME LAPSED INTO AN UNREAL DIMENSION. MECHANICALLY, SHE CLAWED HER WAY UP UNTIL DUMBLY, SHE WAS AWARE OF THE CABIN JUST AHEAD...



AT THE DOOR, SHE KNOCKED... AND IT WAS OPENED...



FROM THE DEPTHS OF A NIGHTMARISH DREAM, SHE AWOKES SUDDENLY TO THE REALITY OF HER SURROUNDINGS. A YOUNG, HANDSOME MAN HOVERED OVER HER...



**THE  
MAYOR!?**

OF COURSE! YOU GET THE MAYOR TO COME  
HERE AND I CAN MAKE HIM DO ANYTHING  
YOU WANT! I'D GO MYSELF, BUT YOU CAN  
SEE I DON'T HAVE ANY CLOTHES!  
**I'D FREEZE!**



YEAH, BUT...  
THE MAYOR...  
I DON'T KNOW...

I'M ONLY TRYING TO HELP YOU. THEY'LL  
NEVER EXPECT YOU TO GO BACK  
THERE. AND YOU WON'T HAVE  
TO BE AFRAID OF ANYTHING...  
WITH **THIS!**



LATE THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, AFTER A COLD AND BITTER JOURNEY  
DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN, SHE Huddled IN THE SHADOWS UNTIL  
THE MAYOR'S CAR TURNED SLOWLY INTO THE DRIVEWAY AND CAME  
TO A STOP. THEN...

**YOU?! YOU BRAZEN  
HUSSEY! HOW  
DARE YOU...**

**BE QUIET, YOU PURITANICAL OLD FOOL! IF  
YOU WANT TO LIVE, TURN THIS CAR AROUND  
AND DRIVE EXACTLY WHERE I SAY!**



FEARFULLY, THE MAYOR DID AS HE WAS TOLD.  
THE CAR CREEPT SILENTLY FROM THE TOWN,  
ACROSS THE VALLEY AND UP THE MOUNTAIN  
ROAD UNTIL, WITH WHEELS SPINNING AND  
MOTOR WHINING, IT STALLED IN THE DRIFTS.  
FROM THERE, THEY CONTINUED ON FOOT...



LABORIOUSLY, THEY CLIMBED THE REMAINING DISTANCE  
AND STUMBLED HEAVILY INTO THE CABIN...

PLEASE... REST...  
LET ME REST...

OF COURSE,  
MR. MAYOR...  
**DO SIT  
DOWN.**



I PROMISE YOU, YOUR  
WEARINESS SHALL  
NEVERMORE CONCERN  
YOU!

WHA... WHAT ARE  
YOU DOING?

**AAAGGHH!**





IT IS  
DONE.

GEE, LUKE, THAT'S **GREAT!** WE'VE GOT IT  
MADE! NOW WE CAN LIVE RIGHT IN THE  
MAYOR'S HOUSE! WE'LL GET ANYTHING  
WE WANT! WE'LL RUIN THE WHOLE TOWN!

YOU  
STUPID  
GIRL.



WHA...  
STUPID?  
WHY...

**STUPID.** I SAY! BLIND AND STUPID!  
DO YOU THINK I WANT TO POSSESS THIS  
EMPTY SHELL OF A MAN SO I CAN LIVE  
IN HIS HOUSE? DO YOU THINK I CARE  
ABOUT POLITICS OR WEALTH OR,  
EVEN **FAME?**

HEY...WHAT'S  
WRONG? YOU...  
YOU'RE  
DIFFERENT...

YOU THOUGHT TO USE ME AS A  
TOOL TO GAIN YOUR REVENGE,  
BUT YOU MISJUDGED ME! I  
DON'T CARE A FIG FOR YOU **OR**  
YOUR REVENGE! IT WAS **I**  
WHO MADE USE OF **YOU!**



FOOLISH GIRL! THE ONLY WAY I COULD  
EVER LEAVE THIS CABIN WAS TO HAVE  
SOMEONE WHOSE BODY I COULD ENTER,  
WHOSE MIND I COULD CONTROL...  
AND YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME  
THAT SOMEONE!

STOP!  
GET AWAY!  
GET AWAY  
OR I'LL  
SHOOT!



**I  
WARNED  
YOU!**



HA! HA HA HA!  
BULLETS CAN'T  
HURT ME, WOMAN!  
YOU CAN'T STOP  
ME, AND WHEN I  
FINISH WITH YOU,  
I'LL BE FREE!

PLEASE! STOP!  
LEAVE ME ALONE!  
LEAVE ME ALONE!  
DON'T...

NOW I'LL BE FREE TO ROAM  
THE TOWN... THE WORLD!  
**FREE! FREE!**

...FREE TO  
SHARE MEN'S  
SOULS!

HHHHHHH



HER SHRIEKING  
SCREAMS WERE LOST  
IN THE ROAR OF  
FLAMES. THERE WAS  
NO FLOOR TO THE  
FIREPLACE, AND SHE  
FELL DOWN... DOWN...  
EVER DEEPER INTO  
THE FIRES OF HADES,  
HER TORTURED FLESH  
SEARING WITH THE  
AGONY OF OBLIVION,  
HER EARS RINGING  
WITH LUCIFER'S  
TRIUMPHANT, MANIACAL  
LAUGHTER...

HEH! HEH!  
HOT STUFF,  
HUH, GANG? I'M  
NOT GOING TO  
MAKE ANY PUNS  
ABOUT HOW  
**BURNED UP**  
OUR LITTLE GAL  
WAS... BUT SHE'LL BE  
REMEMBERED  
AS A REAL  
**HOT NUMBER!**  
THE DEVIL,  
YOU SAY?





Come now  
to Merry  
Olde England.  
It's the year  
1820. The  
medical  
profession is  
making great  
strides forward.

In fact, it is about to overtake  
two gentlemen involved in a...

# GRAVE UNDERTAKING

Alexander  
Toth,

BUSINESS COULDN'T  
BE WORSE, MR. PEACH!  
NOTHING BUT BILLS!

IT'S THE COMPETITION,  
MR. THWACKUM! TWO  
UNDERTAKING  
ESTABLISHMENTS  
AND HARDLY  
DEATHS ENOUGH  
FOR ONE!

TODAY THEY  
BURIED RICH  
WIDOW BOGGS!  
SUCH A FINE  
SERVICE... SUCH  
A SPLENDID  
CASNET... SUCH  
A HANDSOME  
**PROFIT!!**

UNJUST,  
MR. PEACH!  
THEY GET  
ALL THE  
BUSINESS  
WHILE WE  
STRUGGLE  
TO  
SURVIVE!

A-HEM!





GENTLEMEN! I AM DR. RYDER, CHIEF OF SURGERY AT THE MEDICAL SCHOOL... I'VE A PROPOSITION THAT MAY HELP YOU AS WELL AS ME!



THE MEDICAL SCHOOL IS IN DIRE AND CONSTANT NEED FOR CADAVERS IN OUR RESEARCH... WE'RE PREPARED TO PAY HANDSOMELY FOR ANY SPECIMENS YOU MAY PROVIDE!

HOW CAN WE PROVIDE YOU? THERE AN'T BUSINESS TO PROVIDE US!



IN YOUR TRADE, PERHAPS **SOMETHING** WILL COME TO YOU... MY OFFER STANDS FOR ANY TRADE YOU MIGHT DIG UP! GOOD NIGHT, GENTLEMEN!

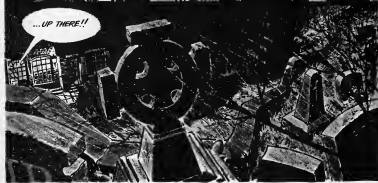
GOOD NIGHT, SIR!

THIS IS OUR BIG OPPORTUNITY, MR. PEACH! HE'S GIVEN ME AN IDEA!



WHAT'S THE GOOD, MR. THWACKUM? WE HAVEN'T A BODY TO BURY LET ALONE **SELL!**

AYE, MR. PEACH, WE'VE NONE... BUT I'M THINKING OF A SPOT THAT'S WELL STOCKED FOR THIS NEW SIDELINE...



...UP THERE!!

COO! WHAT A  
HEAVY ONE! (RUFF)  
DOCTORS'LL BE  
SUSPICIOUS IF  
WE'VE GRABBED  
ONE THAT'S  
TOO RIPE,  
MR.  
THWACKUM!

THAT'S  
WHY I'VE  
PICKED  
WIDOW  
BOGGS,  
MR.  
PEACH...  
FRESH  
PUT AWAY  
TODAY!

AN' STILL  
WEARIN' ALL  
HER FINE  
JEWELS, MR.  
THWACKUM!

SHE'LL HAVE SCARGE  
USE FOR THOSE ON THE  
SURGEON'S TABLE!

WHAT'S  
THIS?  
MONSTERS!  
GHOULS!!

HE'S DEAD!  
COO, MR.  
THWACKUM!  
WHAT'VE  
WE  
DONE?!

DONE, MR. PEACH? WHY  
WE'VE DOUBLED OUR PROFIT!  
THAT'S WHAT WE'VE DONE!

WELL DONE, GENTLEMEN!  
TWO FINE SPECIMENS!  
MEDICAL SCIENCE IS  
ADVANCED AND YOU  
TURN A FINE PROFIT!  
KEEP UP THE GOOD  
WORK!



Encouraged by success, Thwackum and Peach rushed head-long into the resurrection business... And when nature was slow to produce the 'goods'...



DRINK UP, M' FELLOW, DRINK UP! ABANDONED YOUR HOME VILLAGE, HAVE YOU?

INNKEEP!  
MORE ALE!

THA' PLACE! SUMPIN'S QUEER THER'! ALWASH DYN'! EVER' NIGHT! LASH NIGHT... **SIX!** GETTIN' OUT 'FORE I, DIE! **NEVER GOIN' BACK!** THASH RIGH'...

PITY!  
FOOR FELLOW!  
LET'S DRINK,  
ON THAT, MR.  
PEACH!

RIGHT  
YOU ARE!  
**MORE ALE!!**

EVER'BODY DIE!  
SIXSH MORE 'NEV'  
GOIN'! DRINK UP!  
MORE ALE! WHERE  
WE GOIN', GENTS?

STEADY!  
JUST A  
LITTLE  
FURTHER...  
EASY  
DOES  
IT!

EASY... DOES... IT!

ARRRGHKKK!



HARD WORK, MR. PEACH!  
STRAINS THE HEART! AND  
EXPENSIVE... ALL THAT MONEY  
FOR ALE! IF ONLY WE  
LIVED IN THIS FELLOW'S  
VILLAGE...

SIX DEAD  
LAST NIGHT!  
A RUDDY  
**TREASURE,**  
MR.  
THWACKUM!  
NOT REALLY  
THAT FAR...  
COME DAWN I  
COULD HITCH  
UP THE VAN  
AND...

The next day...

WE'VE MADE  
TOO MUCH HASTE,  
MR. PEACH! IT'S  
STILL DAYLIGHT!

B-BUT LOOK! WINDOWS.. DOORS...  
BOLTED AND SHUTTERED TIGHT!  
THEY'RE AFRAID TO COME OUT,  
MR. THWACKUM!

AND THE GRAVEYARD!  
UNWATCHED AND  
UNPROTECTED!

STILL LIGHT!  
DO YOU THINK  
SOMEONE  
FROM THE  
VILLAGE  
MIGHT...  
?

AS YOU SAID... THEY'RE  
AFRAID TO COME OUT!  
IT'S A FIELD DAY,  
MR. PEACH... A  
**FIELD DAY!**

THIS IS THE  
LAST THAT CAN  
FIT! A VAN  
FULL AT 10  
POUNDS A  
HEAD, MR.  
THWACKUM!

A FINE DAY'S WORK, MR. PEACH!

WE'LL EMPTY  
RYDER'S PURSE  
WITH THIS LOT!  
SHOULD KEEP  
HIM AND MEDICAL  
SCIENCE BUSY  
FOR SOME  
TIME!

SPECIMENS GALORE  
FOR YOU TONIGHT,  
DR. RYDER! A  
WHOLE VAN  
FULL!

MARVELOUS!  
HOW DID YOU  
MANAGE  
THIS?

IN HERE!  
NO ONE  
CAN SEE  
YOU  
UNLOAD!



I CAN'T  
BELIEVE IT!  
I MUST  
SEE FOR  
MYSELF!  
HOW DID  
YOU DO  
IT?!!

AN UNFORTUNATE VILLAGE, SIR...  
TRAGIC MISHAPPENINGS...

TUT, TUT,  
MR. PEACH!  
TRADE  
SECRETS!


GOOD LORD! YOU IMBECILES!  
THAT VILLAGE... THOSE  
DEATHS... IT WAS THE  
WORK OF...



VAMPIRES!!


Gets you  
right in the  
neck, eh, CREEPS?  
Just goes to  
prove... there's  
nothing like  
your own YARD,  
no matter how  
GRAVE! Now  
get set to  
UNDERTAKE my  
next bit of fear-  
some fiction...





NOW, A FEARSOME FROLIC INTO THE DARK AGES FOR SOME DARK DOINGS... HOPE ALL YOU HYSTERICAL HISTORIANS WILL ENJOY THE REEKING RESERVATIONS I'VE PREPARED FOR YOU AT...


# CASTLE CARRION!




RAIN FELL IN TORRENTS OUT OF THE BLACK SKY, LASHING ERIC OF URIEN AND HIS NERVOUS, SHYING MOUNT WITH ICY PELLETS... THE SOUND OF THE STORM RISING IN COMPETITION TO THE DIN ERIC RAISED WITH THE GREAT IRON RING AGAINST THE DECAYING TIMBERS OF THE CASTLE GATE...

OPEN THE GATES!  
OPEN FOR A TRAVELER  
BEFORE HE DROWNS IN  
THIS DELUGE! IF ANY  
ONE BE THERE...  
**OPEN!**

FOR LONG MOMENTS ONLY THE RAIN ANSWERED ERIC'S EFFORTS, THEN HE FELT A WARRIOR'S DISCOMFORT OF A STRANGE GAZE UPON HIM, AND A DRY RATTLE OF A VOICE KNIFED EFFORTLESSLY TO HIM THROUGH THE DOWN POUR...



THIS CASTLE IS ANCIENT... SCANT COMFORT TO THE TRAVELER WILL BE FOUND WITHIN THESE WALLS!



WOULD YOU TURN A WAY-FARER TO A STORM SUCH AS THIS? I DON'T SEEK SPLENDOR... ONLY SHELTER!



AS YOU WILL  
THEN... **ENTER!**

WHAT MANNER OF PLACE  
IS THIS? THE STENCH OF  
DEATH AND DECAY HOVERS  
AS IN THE AIR OF A CHARNEL  
HOUSE... MY HAND SHALL  
NOT STRAY FAR FROM MY  
SWORD HILT THROUGH THIS  
NIGHT'S LODGING!



COME, MY  
MASTER  
AWAITS YOU!

TRULY ROME'S GREAT  
CATACOMBS OFFER MORE  
CHEER THAN THESE  
CRUMBLING WALLS! HE  
WHO WOULD CALL HIM-  
SELF MASTER OF THIS  
MANOR MUST BE  
STRANGE INDEED...



TAKE CARE, SIR KNIGHT!  
YOU WALK IN A REALM  
OF **EVIL!**



ERIC WHIRLED, ONLY TO FEEL HIMSELF RESTRAINED BY A CHILL TOUCH, AS THOUGH A HAND OF ICE GRIPPED HIS SHOULDER...



**HOLD!** NONE MAY SPEAK WITH THE LADY ELAINE... IT IS FORBIDDEN!

AND NONE MAY LAY HANDS ON ERIC OF UREN!



'TIS BUT A HINT OF THE CASTLE'S HORRORS! FLEE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

ERIC'S BLADE FLASHED, BUT FROZE MID-STROKE AT THE FEARFUL SIGHT OF THAT WHICH HE ATTACKED...



**DEVIL'S WORK!**



NOT WHILE I'VE SWORD IN HAND AND STRENGTH OF ARM!

I AM MAGNUS THE MAGICIAN! YOU SOUGHT THE SHELTER OF MY GATES, YET YOU DARE FORCE YOURSELF ON MY DAUGHTER, YOU DARE TAKE SWORD TO MY SERVANTS?!



IS THIS HOW MY HOSPITALITY IS HONORED?



MY BLADE IS RAISED TO ANY OBSCENITY SUCH AS THAT YOU CALL SERVANT! AS FOR THE LADY...

I CAME TO HIM, FATHER! YOU SURROUND ME WITH LONG DEAD HORRORS ANIMATED BY YOUR MAGIC, AND EXPECT ME NOT TO RUSH TO THE FIRST BREATH OF LIFE VISITED ON THIS PALACE OF DECAY? I---



AWAY WITH YOUR WEAPON, ERIC OF URIEN, AND I'LL ATTEND YOU, THERE'S MUCH YET OF MY CASTLE FOR A GUEST TO VIEW...

BE WARNED, MAGICIAN! MY SWORD IS SHEATHED BUT QUICK TO HAND... I'VE LITTLE STOMACH FOR THE CREATIONS OF YOUR DARK POWERS!



ENOUGH, ELAINE! GO TO YOUR ROOM!

NO ONE SHOULD BE HELD IN THIS FOUL BED OF SORCERY AS HE DOES HIS OWN DAUGHTER! GIVEN TIME AND CHANCE, I MAY FREE HER OF THIS CARRION HOUSE!



I MERELY MAKE USE OF WHAT IS HERE -- THIS CASTLE, THOSE WHO ONCE PEOPLED IT... BUT YOU WERE UNAWPRESSED WITH MY SERVANT... PERHAPS A WARRIOR LIKE YOURSELF WOULD BE MORE INTRIGUED BY...



THINK I COULDN'T GUESS YOUR THOUGHTS ... SUSPECT YOU'D HOPE TO CARRY AWAY ELAINE? SHE'S TOO FOOLISH TO APPRECIATE WHAT I'VE GIVEN HER, AND YOU'LL **DIE** FOR HOPING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT!!



WE'LL STRUCK, SIR KNIGHT! BUT TO WHAT AVAIL...?



...**THEY'RE ALREADY DEAD!** YOU CAN SLOW THEM, ENCUMBER THEM, BUT WHILE THERE'S DONE TO STAND ON, THEY'LL RISE TO FIGHT AGAIN! YOUR SWORD WILL SHATTER BEFORE THEY DO!!



THEN LET ME SAVE MY STEEL AND TRY... **YOUR FLAME!**



CURSE THE MAGICIAN'S BLACK SKILLS! EVEN THE FIRE ONLY SLOWS THEIR ATTACK... I'VE PURCHASED BUT SCANT TIME!



MY LADY! IF YOU WOULD  
ESCAPE THIS HOUSE OF  
WALKING DEAD, DECIDE  
NOW! WE MUST MOVE  
QUICKLY!

THERE IS LITTLE TO  
DECIDE! LONG YEARS  
HAVE I YEARNED TO  
BE FREE OF MY FATHER'S  
HOLD, TO ABANDON THE  
CASTLE AND ITS CARRION  
ATMOSPHERE!



ERIC GLAMMED HOME THE BOLT ON THE DOOR, AL-  
READY THERE WERE SOUNDS ON THE STAIRS...

PRAY IT HOLDS LONG  
ENOUGH TO SERVE OUR  
NEEDS. WHAT LINEN YOU  
HAVE MUST BE CUT  
INTO STRIPS...



WITH FEVERISH FINGERS, ERIC AND ELAINE BENT TO  
THEIR TASK DRIVEN BY THE BRUTE ASSAULT OF  
BONY FISTS AND BODIES ON THE EVER WEAKEN-  
ING DOOR...

LONG ENOUGH TO  
REACH THE BATTLEMENT  
...IF IT HOLDS! GET  
READY, MY LADY...



A SICKENING SOUND OF SPLINTERING WOOD  
SPLIT THROUGH THE TOWER ROOM...



...NOW, ELAINE!!

ASSAILED BY THE FULL FURY OF WIND AND RAIN, THEY INCHED DOWN THE FRAGILE ESCAPE LINE... FROM THE WINDOW ABOVE, ERIC HEARD A VOICE, SHATTERING WITH MENACE THROUGH THE STORM...



URIEN WHELP, YOU'VE SEALED YOUR DOOM! YOU'LL DIE IN THE AIR WHERE YOU DANGLE! FOR IN THE LAND OF THE CARRION...



...THE VULTURE IS KING!



FOR ONE PITIFUL INSTANT, ERIC DARED HOPE MAGNUS WAS DESTROYING HIMSELF IN A MAD GESTURE, ONLY TO WITNESS A HIDEOUS TRANSFORMATION BRING SHARP CLAWED DEATH SWOOPING DOWN AT THEM!

DESPERATELY ERIC LOOSENEED HIS GRIP, SLIDING FASTER AND FASTER TOWARD THE STONE FLOOR OF THE BATTLEMENT... BUT NOT NEARLY FAST ENOUGH TO ESCAPE THE PLANNING FURY OF WINGED EVIL!



A HAZY NUMBNESS GRIPPED ERIC... HIS EFFORT HAD BROUGHT THEM NEAR ENOUGH TO THE BATTLEMENT TO SURVIVE THE FALL, NOW HE FUMBLER FOR HIS SWORD, AND TRIED TO MAKE HIMSELF RISE...



ERIC! GET UP! HE'LL KILL YOU! GET UP! GET UP!

A BLURRED TERRIBLE FORM HURTLIED AT HIM, EVER LARGER AND CLOSER... HIS LEGS TREMBLED, NAUSEA SWEEPED THROUGH HIM... IT WAS ALL HE COULD DO TO GRIP THE SWORD WITH BOTH HANDS AND RAISE IT IN FRONT OF HIM...



...AND AGAIN HE WITNESSED A TERRIBLE TRANSFORMATION...

HE CAME TOO CLOSE... TOO FAST... TO TURN ASIDE... HIS VERY OWN BLOOD-LUST DROVE HIM TO IMPALE HIMSELF!



FAREWELL, SORCERER! YOU CRUMBLE TO THE SAME FATE AS MUST ALL YOUR CHARDES HELD IN LIVING DEATH BY YOUR SPELLS...



YOUR FATHER'S POWER IS BROKEN, ELAINE, HIS MAGIC NO LONGER HOLDS CLAIM... YOU'RE FREE, ELAINE, NOW YOU'RE -- **ELAINE!!!**



THE WILDERNESS OF THE STORM HAD LAPSED INTO A SLOW STEADY RAIN, GRADUALLY WASHING AWAY THE MOST PERFECT OF MAGNUS THE MAGICIAN'S ART... THE LONG DEAD DAUGHTER HE'D CREATED A FORTRESS OF FEAR TO PROTECT...

...NOW... NOW YOU'RE FREE...



LOOKS LIKE ERIC'S POTENTIAL ROMANCE HAS JUST DISSOLVED AWAY... OH, WELL, ELAINE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A GOOD KID, BUT FRANKLY, I THINK HER FATHER WAS FOR THE BIRDS!



STEP RIGHT UP, FEAR FANCIERS, AND GET ON LINE FOR YOUR TERROR TICKETS INTO THE MACABRE MUSEUM OF CLAUDE RENAI, WHERE EACH AND EVERY FEAR-INSPIRING EXHIBIT IS A TERRIFYING...

# IMAGE IN WAX!

HOW CAN YOU DO IT, RENAI? I'VE WORKED FOR YEARS IN MY OWN MUSEUM AND NEVER ACHIEVED SUCH REALISM! THESE OROTESQUES, THESE MONSTROUSITIES... HOW DO YOU DO IT?

MY METHODS ARE MY OWN, MONSIEUR VIGO. I DO NOT DISCUSS THEM, NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I HAVE MANY VISITORS TO ATTEND TO!



THE OWNER OF THE POPULAR PARIS MUSEUM, TURNS AND STRIDES STIFFLY AWAY FROM GERARD VIGO, HIS CHIEF COMPETITOR. SMARTING FROM THE CURT DISMISSAL, VIGO CAN ONLY MOVE MOODILY AMONG THE LOOMING EXHIBITS, STARING NOW AT THE BESTIAL FURY OF A WEREWOLF, NOW THE GHOULS' CARNAL SAVAGERY, NOW THE MENACING GLOW OF A SORCERER... AND WITH EACH VIEWING HIS DEPRESSION AND RESENTMENT GROWS...





RENAIS IS RUINING ME! WHO'LL PAY TO SEE MY HISTORICAL TAB-LEAUS, MY LIFELESS REENACTMENTS OF FAMOUS CRIMES, WHEN THEY CAN HAVE THIS?!



LOOK AT THEM! CROWDING LIKE CATTLE... I WAS IN BUSINESS BEFORE HIM, IT SHOULD BE MY PLACE THEY'RE AT, AND IT STILL *COULD*, IF ONLY RENAISSANCE WOULD GIVE ME SOME HINT, SOME CLUE...

VIGO ELBOWS HIS WAY TO CLAUDE RENAISSANCE, PUSHING CLOSE TO THE ALDOP IMPASSIVE FORM, PLEADING DESPERATELY TO GAIN THE ATTENTION OF THOSE UNBLINKING, DISTANT EYES...

I CAN TELL YOU *NOTHING*, MONSIEUR VIGO. MY MUSEUM IS UNIQUE! YOU CANNOT DUPLICATE IT!

RENAISSANCE, I'M DESPERATE! YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME... I'LL GIVE EVERY FRANC I'VE GOT TO LEARN... PLEASE!

SUDDENLY VIGO IS TALKING TO THE BACK OF RENAISSANCE'S COAT AS THE MUSEUM OWNER MOVES AWAY IN HIS RIGID UNBENDING WALK...

THERE IS NOTHING FURTHER TO SAY, MONSIEUR VIGO, IT IS LATE. I MUST CLEAR THE GALLERY!

THE COLD MONOTONOUS VOICE LEAVES GERARD VIGO SHAKING WITH RAGE, A VIOLENT GROPE WELLING WITHIN HIM...

CLOSING TIME! CLOSING TIME! THIS WAY PLEASE ... CLOSING TIME!

**CLOSING TIME!** CLAUDE RENAISS SOLEMNLY STANDS GUARD AT THE ENTRANCE, WATCHING PATIENTLY UNTIL THE LAST STRAGGLER IS HERDED THROUGH...



**OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM,** NIGHT BEGINS TO OVERTAKE PARIS. WITHIN, RENAISS MOVES WITH HIS MEASURED STRIDE FROM LAMP TO LAMP SMOTHERING THEIR FLAMES...



WITH THE LAST LAMP DARK, HIS FOOTSTEPS ECHO ACROSS THE EMPTY MUSEUM AS HE GOES THROUGH THE DOOR TO THE WORK ROOM IN BACK OF THE MAIN GALLERY...



**LEAVING THE MISSHAPEN MONSTER FORMS ALONE IN THE SHADOWED DARKNESS, SILENT AND FORBODING...**



**NOW! RENAISS HAD HIS CHANCE, NOW IT'S MY TURN! IF I CAN'T SHARE IN HIS SECRET, I CAN AT LEAST ARRANGE THINGS SO IT CAN'T BE USED TO RUIN ME...**



QUICKLY AND QUIETLY GERARD VIGO EASES OUT OF HIS HIDING PLACE THROUGH GROTESQUE SHADOWS CAST BY THE GRUESOME IMAGES, TO THE NEAREST WALL LAMP...

FIRE WILL DO IT! ONE ROARING FIRE AND RENAI'S MONSTERS WILL NO LONGER BE COMPETITION FOR ME! FIRST, I'VE GOT TO MAKE CERTAIN THEIR CREATOR CAN'T SAVE THEM!

REMOVING THE LAMP FROM ITS FIXTURE, VIGO INCHES OPEN THE DOOR TO THE WORKROOM...

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM? WHY IS HE JUST SITTING LIKE THAT? MORE ICY AND RIGID THAN WHEN I TALKED TO HIM... WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? LET HIM STAY IN A TRANCE... MAKES MY TASK ALL THE EASIER!

NO DIFFICULT MATTER TO MAKE IT APPEAR THE FIRE STARTED AS HE WAS WORKING HERE...

YOU'RE A FOOL, VIGO! YOU COULD HAVE LISTENED AND LEFT WELL ENOUGH ALONE!

A CHILL FREEZES VIGO IN MIDSTEP WITH THE STIFF, UNNATURAL PRECISION THAT CHARACTERIZES ALL HIS MOVEMENTS, CLAUDE RENAI RISES AND TURNS, THE DULL UNFLINCHING EYES RIVETED ON VIGO...

PUZZLED, VIGO? FRIGHTENED? UPSET? THAT I KNEW YOU WERE BEHIND ME!

YOU NO DOUBT HEARD ME... OR SOMETHING... I-I DON'T CARE, JUST KEEP BACK... I WARN YOU, KEEP BACK!

THE BLUNT, MONOTONE VOICE IS LIKE A COLD KNIFE TWISTED IN HIS SPINE, VIGO SQUIRMAS UNEASILY; HE RETREATS...

NO, VIGO, YOU HAVE TO BE STOPPED.

KEEP AWAY FROM ME, RENAI... I CAME HERE TO KILL TONIGHT, TO DESTROY... I-I WON'T LET YOU STOP ME... KEEP BACK, KEEP BACK!

WITH A DESPERATE, PITIFUL CRY, VIGO HURLS THE LIGHTED LAMP IN HIS HAND...

I WARNED YOU!

THE FLAMES SUDDENLY WREATH THE ADVANCING FIGURE, FEEDING ON THE VERY FLESH AND CLOTHING OF CLAUDE RENAI, THEIR ALL CONSUMING HEAT WORKING A STRANGE AND TERRIBLE TRANSFORMATION...



SHRIEKING WITH HORROR AT THE MELTING VISION BEFORE HIM, VIGO FALLS BACK AGAINST THE WORKROOM DOOR...

SLOWLY, SO VERY SLOWLY, THE HINGES SHRIEK AND CRY, THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN...



WAX! SOME LONG DEAD FORM COATED WITH WAX! NOTHING BUT WAX!

YES, RENAI WAS AN IMAGE OF WAX...



EVEN AS WE ARE NOT!

A-ALIVE! ALL ALIVE NO WONDER... LOOKED SO REAL... Y-YOU LIVE...



EVEN AS RENAI DID NOT, SAVE BY NECROMANCY WHILE WE RESTED THROUGH THE DAY, SAFE UNTIL WE COULD RISE TO WORK OUR EVIL DURING THE NIGHT!

A PERFECT ARRANGEMENT UNTIL YOU SET YOUR HAND AGAINST OUR WAXEN CHARGE!



NOW EVEN THE CADAVEROUS FRAME THAT WAS CLAUDE RENAI LIES SMOULDERING TURNED TO ASH... YET OUR ARRANGEMENT MUST BE CONTINUED...

PLEASE... I... I DIDN'T... I COULDN'T KNOW... I-I-I...



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE USUAL CROWD OF EARLY SIGHTSEERS AND TOURISTS GATHERS BEFORE THE DOORS, ONLY TO FACE A DISAPPOINTING NOTICE...



YET, AS PROMISED, THE DISAPPOINTMENT IS ONLY TEMPORARY, AND WITHIN A FEW DAYS...



INDEED, THE ONLY TRULY NOTICEABLE CHANGE SEEMS TO BE IN VIGO HIMSELF: NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUCCESSSES SEEMING TO MAKE HIM MORE ALLOOF AND IMPASSIVE, STIFF AND UNNATURAL IN BEARING.



...AND IT IS MOST DIFFICULT TO GAIN THE ATTENTION OF THOSE UNBLINKING, DISTANT EYES.



YES, INDEED, GHOUISH GLANCERS, I'M AFRAID THE WHOLE AFFAIR HAS TURNED MONSIEUR VIGO INTO A BIT OF A STIFF... OF COURSE IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR HIM TO CHANGE... JUST WAIT UNTIL THE FIRST *REALLY* HOT DAY! HEE, HEE, HEE!



SHARPEN UP THOSE CANINES FOR A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT MORSEL, FRIENDS! JEE, HEE! THIS ONE'S A FAIRY TALE OF SORTS... ONLY THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE, SO WE'LL HAVE TO STEP INTO THE BEAMIER SIDE OF TOWN IF WE WANT TO BE IN ON...

# THE RESCUE OF THE MORNING MAID!



HE WAS A CREATURE OF DARKNESS - NATURE HAD RENDERED HIM UNABLE TO MINGLE WITH OTHER MEN BY THE FULL LIGHT OF DAY - LEST THEY RUN FROM HIM IN ABJECT TERROR!

EVERY NIGHT HE EMERGED FROM HIS HIDING PLACE - ROAMING WITH EERIE STEALTH ON THE ROOFTOPS OF THE CONDEMNED AND DESERTED BUILDINGS!



LIKE A PROWLING BEAST - HE SILENTLY DREW UP TO THEM AND LISTENED TO THEIR CONVERSATION!



MY DOLL HAS A TORN HEAD, MA!

SHUT UP WITH YER STINKIN' DOLL, YOU! AND DON'T CALL ME MA!



YA - YA KNOCKED IT OVER THE ROOF!

GOOD! NOW MAYBE Y'ALL SHUT YER FACE WHEN I TELL YA!



I WANT MY DOLLY!  
I WANT MY DOLLY!

STOP THAT WHIMPERIN', EMMA - OR I'LL LAY INTA YA LIKE A BUTCHER IN A COMPEN!



THE LITTLE GIRL STIFLED HER SOBS, BUT THE TEARS CONTINUED, SOAKING HER TINY HANDS AND SOILED SKIRT!

SHE'S CRYIN'! I KNEW SHE WAS DIFFERENT! SHE AIN'T LIKE THE OLD HAG - NOT LIKE ME, NEITHER! WE'RE NITE PEOPLE, US TWO! BUT EMMA -



EMMA! SHE'S THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I'VE SEEN IN ALL MY LIFE!



HE MOVED SILENT AS A PHANTOM, TO WHERE HE COULD PEER BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS!

THERE'S HER DOLL!



SO LONG HAD HE MINGLED WITH THE GLOOM OF THE RAT-INFESTED SLUM THAT HE KNEW HIS WAY IN SPITE OF THE DARKNESS...



POOR THING! SHE OUGHT TO HAVE HER DOLLY BACK! SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO CRY LIKE THAT!



THE OLD HAG AIN'T WATCHIN'! I'LL JUST PUT IT DOWN - AND SLIP BACK INTO THE SHADOWS!



SHE FOUND IT!

NOW SHE KNOWS... SHE AIN'T ALONE!





IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT  
THING IN THE WORLD TO  
KNOW YA AIN'T ALONE! AT  
LEAST IT IS FOR THE  
DAYTIME PEOPLE!

US NIGHT PEOPLE DON'T HAVE  
FEELINGS! BUT A LITTLE GIRL  
WITH THE BRIGHTNESS OF  
MORNING IN HER EYES AIN'T  
THE SAME!



LOOK, EMMA! THE MOON'S COMIN' UP!

I'M...DIZZY! MA!  
I... UHHH!

HIS HEART ACHED FOR THE GIRL AS HE WATCHED...  
SHOULD HE STEP FORWARD TO HER? OR TAKE HE LET  
HIMSELF BE SEEN?



...I SEEM TO HAVE  
BEEN BLEERING!



HAHAHA!!

INDEED YOU HAVE, EMMA  
DEAR!



I REMEMBER NOW!  
YOU-YOU'VE IMPRISONED  
ME- IN THIS CHILD'S BODY!  
MADE ME A SLAVE- MADE  
ME LIVE IN HORRID SQUALOR!

I'VE DONE THAT AND  
MORE, YOU WRETCHED,  
ACCURSED LITTLE DOLT!



"I'VE KEPT YOU IN BOND-  
AGE FOR AGE AFTER AGE!  
I'VE DRAGGED YOU THROUGH  
THE WORST BLUMS OF  
THE WORLD- LENT YOUR BODY  
TO DISEASE AND ROT!"



EVER SINCE THE  
DAY YOU DARED  
TO STEAL THE MAN  
I LOVED... YOU'VE  
SUFFERED AS NO  
ONE ELSE HAS  
EVER SUFFERED  
BEFORE!



"I WAS THE MIGHTIEST  
SORCERESS- THE MOST  
EXQUISITELY BEAUTIFUL  
WOMAN- THAT THE WORLD  
HAD EVER KNOWN!"



"ANYTHING I WANTED WAS MINE! BUT, LIKE  
A FOOL, I FELL IN LOVE! IT WAS YOU, EMMA-  
-YOU STOLE HIS HEART AWAY!"



DON'T YOU REMEMBER HOW I  
KEPT THE TWO OF YOU IMPRISON-  
ED? HOW HE FOUND HIS WAY  
OUT- HELPED YOU ESCAPE?  
DON'T YOU REMEMBER?



YOU BOTH KNEW THERE'D NEVER BE ANY SAFETY FROM MY PITILESS WRATH - AND SO YOU TRIED TO ESCAPE THROUGH THE INVIOLEABLE DOOR OF DEATH!



HE WAS BEYOND THE REACH OF MY FURY - BUT FATE HAD DELIVERED YOU INTO MY HANDS - AND HERE YOU'VE REMAINED FOR CENTURIES!



MY VENGEANCE WILL GO ON, EMMA! ETERNALLY! YOU'LL NEVER BE FREE TO TRAVEL THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF DESTINY!



ONCE EVERY MONTH, WHEN THE LIGHT OF THE FULL MOON TOUCHES YOU - YOU'LL BE RECALLED TO AWARENESS OF THE HORRIBLE REVENGE I'VE EXACTED FROM YOU!

SUDDENLY, THE WILD EYES OF THE ANCIENT FIEND WERE FIXED UPON....

EMMA'S VOICE FROZE IN HER THROAT, AS SHE GAZED UPON THE GHASTLY, HATE-FILLED FACE!

YOUR DOLL? HOW DID YOU GET IT BACK? HOW?



SO - THERE'S SOMEONE HERE! A FRIEND FOR MY LITTLE EMMA, EH?







CAN'T CONTROL MY  
MUSCLES! SHE'S  
TOO STRONG!  
MAYBE -IF I GO  
ALONG EASY-FOR  
NOW-!

THAT'S RIGHT-  
DON'T TRY TO  
RESIST ME!  
JUST DO AS I  
COMMAND!

I WON'T HURT  
YOU- VERY  
MUCH! JUST  
A FEW  
**SCREAMS**  
BEFORE YOU  
GO! A FEW  
MINUTES OF  
BEGGING FOR  
DEATH!

I'M RIGHT ON  
THE EDGE OF  
THE BROKEN  
PART! CAN'T  
GO ANY  
FARTHER GOT  
TO MAKE HER!

WHAT'S **THIS**? YOU  
**DARE** DEFY ME?  
WHY YOU LUCKLESS  
FOOL....



WHA-? **NO!**





WITH A CRY OF JOY HE LEAPED ACROSS THE DECAYING, ROTTED ROOF TOPS! IN HIS EXCITEMENT, HE FORGOT THAT HE WAS A BRUTE - FORGOT HE WAS A CREATURE OF THE SHADOWS - FORGOT ALL BUT THE LOVELY GIRL HE HAD SAVED!



AND SO, IN A HANDFUL OF WIND-BLOWN DUST, SHE VANISHED FROM HIM, TO CONTINUE HER INTERRUPTED JOURNEY TO WHATEVER LIES BEYOND DEATH'S PORTAL.



AS FOR HIM... AFTER A WHILE, HE LUMBERED OFF INTO THE GLOOM WHICH WAS HIS WORLD - A STRANGE, TORN DOLL GENTLY RESTING IN HIS ARMS...!



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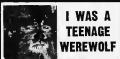
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FEELING A BIT PEAKED AFTER MY LAST FEW FRIGHT FABLES? WHAT YOU FEAR FOLLOWERS NEED IS AN OCEAN VOYAGE TO PUT A LITTLE COLOR IN YOUR CHEEKS...LIKE GREEN! ALL SET, SHIVERING SHIPMATES? JOIN ME AT THE HELM OF THE GUILD SHIP *RO STAR*...HOPE YOU WON'T BE INCONVENIENCED...THEY'RE RUNNING OUT OF HANDS AND CAN ONLY USE A...

# SKELETON CREW!

LIKE A HARPOONED WHALE BREATHING ITS LAST, THE FREIGHTER LAY PILED INTO THE ROCKS SOMEWHERE OFF THE COAST OF HONDURAS...BREAKERS SMACKED AGAINST ITS IRON HULL AS THOUGH TRYING TO DRIVE THE VESSEL FROM THE REEF...GULLS CIRCLED CURIOUSLY OVERHEAD, BUT REFUSED TO LAND ON THE EMPTY DECKS...FINALLY, THE DESOLATE AIR WAS BROKEN BY THE CHUGGING OF AN APPROACHING DIESEL ENGINE...

GOOD BOY, MANUEL! IF SHE'S GOT A FAIR CARGO, THE SALVAGE RIGHTS COULD MAKE US RICH!

LOOK, SEÑOR CARPENTER, IT'S AS I SAID! I *KNEW* I HEARD A CRASH BEFORE DAWN THIS MORNING!

PUTTING IN AS CLOSE TO THE STRICKEN SHIP AS THEY DARED, THE TWO MEN LOST NO TIME IN ASSAULTING THE SALT-SPRAYED SIDE OF THE CREAKING WRECK...

NO SIGN OF ANYONE... THEY'VE ABANDONED HER!

THE FOOLS! DOESN'T SEEM IN DANGER OF SINKING...THEY HAVE GIVEN US A FINE PRIZE!





SEÑOR  
CARPENTER!  
THE LIFEBOAT...  
IF THEY'VE DESERTED  
THE SHIP WHY HASN'T  
THE LIFEBOAT BEEN  
USED?

STRANGE  
ALL RIGHT...  
DOWNRIGHT  
WEIRD!

ABOVE THEM, THE GULLS GAVE PIERCING SHRIEKS... BENEATH THEIR FEET, THE TIDE RHYTHMICALLY ROCKED THE STRANDED VESSEL, CREAKING AND MOANING...



ANYBODY HERE?  
HEY! ANYONE  
AROUND?

I DON'T LIKE  
THIS... I DON'T LIKE  
THIS AT A--

MANUEL NEVER FINISHED. BOTH MEN WHIRLED AT THE NEW SOUND... A DULL, HOLLOW, ROLLING... THUMP AFTER THUMP AFTER THUMP...



MADRE DE  
DIOS!

LORD!



THEY MOVED WITHOUT RELISH IN THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH THE GRISLY WARNING HAD COME... THEIR OWN FOOTSTEPS ECHOING AS HOLLOWLY ON THE DECK AS HAD THE BLEACHED WHITE SKULL...

AH!! WHAT KIND OF  
SHIP IS THIS? PERHAPS  
SEÑOR CARPENTER, IT'S  
BETTER IF WE GO FOR  
THE AUTHORITIES  
IMMEDIATELY...

WHERE'S YOUR  
NERVE, BOY? WE'RE  
CLAIMING THIS TUB,  
LET'S SEE IT  
THROUGH!

MANUEL SHRUGGED OFF HIS FEAR. THE TWO MEN MOVED ON CAUTIOUSLY, MAKING THEIR WAY TO THE BRIDGE...THE DOOR WAS SEALED FROM THE INSIDE. AFTER SOME BATTERING, IT BURST OPEN.



JUST LIKE THE OTHERS!  
BONE AND A FEW SHREDS  
OF CLOTHES...

HE WAS WRITING IN THE  
LOG! PERHAPS THERE'S  
SOMETHING ABOUT...  
T-THIS!...

GENTLY, MANUEL SLIPPED THE RAGGED LOG-BOOK FROM THE BONY FINGERS, AND LEAPED THROUGH THE PAGES. THE LAST ENTRY WAS LONG AND UNOFFICIAL, ALMOST ILLEGIBLY SCRAWLED ..

HE WAS THE FIRST MATE...  
NAME'S THORSEN. SEEMS  
TO HAVE WRITTEN THIS  
VERY HURRIEDLY...

READ IT...  
SEE WHAT  
YOU CAN  
LEARN, MANUEL...  
I'M GONNA  
CHECK OUT THE  
HOLD. FIND OUT WHAT  
THE CARGO IS!



COM'N, DUFFY! QUIT  
BELL-YACHIN' AN' HOLD  
UP YOUR END!

IT'S NOT FAIR WE  
SHOULD BAIL WITH SUCH A  
THING... A COFFIN ABOARD  
WILL JUNK US FOR CERTAIN,  
YOU MARK MY WORDS!  
BAD LUCK'S  
COMIN'!



"IT BEGAN WITH THE COFFIN. IF WE  
HADN'T TAKEN ON THAT COFFIN DOWN  
IN BRAZIL, I WOULDN'T BE SITTING  
HERE WRITING THIS, AND THE RIO STAR  
WOULD STILL BE STEAMING TOWARD  
GALVESTON..."

"DID I REALLY SENSE SOMETHING EVEN THEN,  
OR WAS IT THE GRUMBLING OF AN OLD HAND  
LIKE DUFFY THAT SENT ME TO CAPTAIN LORCA?"

SOME OF THE CREW'S  
NOT TOO HAPPY ABOUT  
PUTTING ON A DEAD  
MAN, SIR...

COMPANY ORDERS,  
MR. THORSEN. HE WAS  
ONE OF OUR AGENTS,  
BODY'S BEING RETURNED  
TO THE STATES. HAD A  
RUN-IN WITH THE INDIANS,  
SOMETHING ABOUT  
A GIRL...



THEY BELIEVE A SOUL NEEDS  
A PERFECT BODY TO ENJOY THE  
AFTERLIFE. WANTED TO MUTILATE  
THIS FELLOW'S CORPSE TO MAKE  
HIM PAY! MAIN OFFICE THOUGHT  
IT WOULD BE BETTER ALL  
AROUND TO GET THE BODY  
OUT... RAPIDAMENTE!



"SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THAT THE TROUBLE  
BEGAN... SHORTLY BEFORE DAWN AS I WAS  
ABOUT TO COME OFF MY WATCH..."

DEAD? HOW COULD  
IT JUST GO DEAD,  
ALVAREZ?

QUIEN SABE, SEÑOR  
THORSEN? SOMETIMES  
THE SALT AIR GETS TO  
THE CRYSTALS... I'LL  
LOOK INSIDE AND  
SEE WHAT I  
CAN DO!

IF YOU DON'T HAVE  
ANY LUCK BEFORE YOUR  
RELIEF COMES ON, I'LL  
TELL THE CAPTAIN  
AND—

YAAAAA AAA!

"THE CRY CUT THROUGH THE BREAKING DAWN  
LIKE A RAZOR! I RUSHED BELOW TO WHERE  
THE NIGHT GANG WERE WAITING THE CHANGE  
OF SHIFT..."

WHAT THE DEVIL  
GOES ON DOWN  
HERE?!

IT'S DUFFY,  
SIR. WE LOCKED  
HIM IN THE FORWARD  
COMPARTMENT WITH  
THE COFFIN! JUST A JOKE...

THAT OL' IRISHMAN  
AIN'T BEEN SO FEISTY  
SINCE HE GOT A  
CORPSE FOR A BUNK-  
MATE! HA! SCREAM-  
ING LIKE AN OLD  
LADY!

A FINE BUNCH OF IDIOTS!  
GET HIM OUT OF THERE!  
...RIGHT NOW!

WE WAS JUST  
FOOLIN'... YOU  
SHOULDA HEARD  
HIM! "THE CREEPIN'  
BLACK SHADON" WAS  
TRYING TO GET HIM  
...WHAT A LOT OF  
STUFF!

"THE LAUGHTER STOPPED SHORT AS THE HATCH  
SWUNG OPEN THROWING A RAY OF LIGHT INTO  
THE BLACKNESS. THOSE WHO'D FOUND HUMOR  
IN THE HYSTERICAL SHRIEKS OF MOMENTS BE-  
FORE NOW FOUND THEMSELVES SCREAMING..."

DUFFY!  
OH, MY GOD...  
DUFFY!

"NO ONE SAID ANY MORE, BUT IT WAS I WHO FOUND THE FIRE AXE AND PUT IT TO THE HELLISH COFFIN FROM WHICH DUFFY'S DEATH HAD CREPT FORTH..."



I-IT'S JUST LIKE DUFFY...

A MAN NOT DEAD A WEEK, NOTHIN' BUT BONE AND RAGS... AIN'T NATURAL!

CAPTAIN LORCA!

SCUM! PIGS! COWARDS! DESERTERS!



CAPTAIN! THOSE ARE OUR MEN... WHAT'RE THEY DOING? THERE ARE SHARKS IN THOSE WATERS!

COULDN'T STOP THEM... THEY HEARD THE SCREAMS AND GOT TO THE RADIO SHACK BEFORE ME! THEY SAW WHAT HAPPENED... THEY KNOW WHAT'S WRONG!

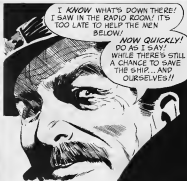


"A QUESTION FORMED ON MY TONGUE AND WAS NEVER UTTERED AS THE MORNING AIR WAS RENT BY A VOLUME OF PITIFUL SCREAMS..."



SANGRE DE CRISTO! DON'T QUESTION, JUST OBEY ME... YOU TAKE THE STERN, I'LL TAKE THE BOW... LOCK EVERY HATCH LEADING ON DECK!

B-BUT THE REST OF THE CREW IS BELOW... SOMETHING'S DOWN THERE...



I KNOW WHAT'S DOWN THERE! I SAW IN THE RADIO ROOM! IT'S TOO LATE TO HELP THE MEN BELOW!

NOW QUICKLY! DO AS I SAY! WHILE THERE'S STILL A CHANCE TO SAVE THE SHIP... AND OURSELVES!!

"MUTING MY EARS TO THE HORRENDOUS SHRIEKS BELOW DECK, I RUSHED TO COMPLETE MY TASK, SLAMMING HATCH AFTER HATCH...AND SO PASSED THE RADIO ROOM...ALVAREZ HAD LOCATED THE TROUBLE; THE LAST THING HE DID ON EARTH!"



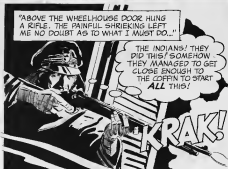
"WITH ALL REAR HATCHES SECURED, I CLAMBERED TO THE BRIDGE EXPECTING TO MEET THE CAPTAIN...THE SOUND OF GUNSHOTS TOLD ME HE'D BEEN UNABLE TO GET ALL THE BOW HATCHES..."



"THE SCREAMS WERE NOT THE END WITH THE RISING SUN TO ITS BACK, SOMETHING CAME STAGGERING ACROSS THE DECK, VAGUELY MAN-LIKE BUT WITH A SKIN OF SHINING WRITHING BLACKNESS...YET THE VOICE, THE HIDEOUS TORTURED VOICE...WAS THAT OF THE CAPTAIN!"



"ABOVE THE WHEELHOUSE DOOR HUNG A RIFLE. THE PAINFUL SHRIEKING LEFT ME NO DOUBT AS TO WHAT I MUST DO..."



"THE WHEELHOUSE IS COMPLETELY SEALED OFF. I HAVE SET THE SHIP ON A COURSE FOR SHORE. THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE I WILL MAKE IT, YET STILL I WRITE...IT TAKES MY MIND OFF...OFF WHAT'S WAITING OUT THERE! BUT NOW SOMETHING OCCURS TO ME...SOMETHING..."





MANUEL CLOSED THE BOOK. THERE WAS NOTHING MORE TO READ. THE SUN BEAT THROUGH THE GLASS OF THE WHEELHOUSE ITS HEAT MAGNIFIED, YET MANUEL FOUND HIMSELF SHIVERING...



HE SHIFTED UNCOMFORTABLY AND SOMETHING CRUNCHED UNDERFOOT...FOR THE FIRST TIME, MANUEL BECAME AWARE OF WHAT LITTERED THE FLOOR OF THE WHEELHOUSE...



SUDDENLY MANUEL UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING...HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE CREEPING HORROR THAT HAD TURNED THE FREIGHTER **RIO STAR** INTO A SHIP OF HELL!



AND JUST AS SUDDENLY, THERE WAS NO PLACE TO RUN. MANUEL STARED OUT AT A WRITHING, CRAWLING SEA OF GLEAMING EBONY WHOSE LEAD POINT WAS WHAT REMAINED OF CARPENTER... **WARRIOR ANTS!** CONSTANTLY FORAGING ANTS OF THE BRAZILIAN JUNGLE WHO EAT ANY FLESH OR FOOD FALLING IN THEIR JUGGERNAUT PATH... AND GO ON FOR MORE! JUST AS THEY DID WHEN THEY FINISHED THE CORPSE IN THE COFFIN WHERE THE INDIANS HAD PLACED THEM... **WARRIOR ANTS!!**



SO MUCH FOR NAUSEATING NATURE'S STUDY, EH, KIDDIES? JUST THINK...THE BOYS WENT ABOARD TO GET THE CARGO, AND **IT** GETS THEM! ALL THEY GET ARE ANTS IN THEIR PANTS... AMONG OTHER PLACES!

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